Categorisation of chalk as minor mineral

1402. SHRI KANJIBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal by the State Government of Gujarat was sent to Central Government to consider Chalk as minor mineral instead of major mineral;

(b) if so, the date on which the proposal was sent to Government; and

(c) the present status of the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a): Yes, Sir.

(b) The Central Government has received the proposal on 25.7.2006.

(c) No final decision has been taken in the matter.

Exploration of diamonds in Mahanadi River-bed

1403. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that diamonds have been explored in Mahanadi river-bed especially in Hirakund of Orissa;

(b) if so, what is the details thereof location-wise; and

(c) the steps taken and proposed to be taken for exploration of diamond from this area?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a): to (c) Yes, Sir. Search for diamond bearing rocks (Kimberlite, Lamproite) in Mahanadi river bed (from the entry point of the river Mahanadi in the State of Orissa to the Hirakud Reservoir and up to the confluence with Tel river in the State of Orissa) has been carried out by GSI. Ground evaluation of the airborne and remote sensing data related to diamond investigation has also been carried out by the GSI in parts of Jharsuguda, Sambalpur and Sundergarh districts of Orissa. However, the source rock for diamond has not yet been discovered.

The exploration and exploitation of non-fuel and non-atomic minerals has been thrown open for private investment and some multinational companies have been granted reconnaissance permits for diamond exploration in Orissa.

Reserve of haemetite iron-ore

1404. SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN:
SHRI CHITTABRATA MAJUMDAR:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated reserve of usable and exploitable haemetite iron-ore in the country;

(b) the consumption of haemetite iron-ore during the last five years by domestic steel industry;

(c) the export of haemetite iron-ore during the last five years;

(d) the estimated domestic production of steel by 2020 and requirement of haemetite iron-ore for achieving the same;

(e) whether Government are contemplating ban on export of haemetite iron-ore; and

(f) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) and (b) As per available information, the total reserves of haemetite iron-ore is 5.54 billion tonnes and the total resources are estimated at 12.9 billion tonnes. The domestic consumption of haemetite iron-ore during last five years from 2000-01 to 2004-05 are given below:

(Unit '000 tonnes)

Year	Consumption
2000-01	37,109
2001-02	39,449
2002-03	39,825
2003-04	51,211
2004-05(P)	53,770